

Representative **Fred Jarrett**

41st Legislative District

(Higher Education— *continued*)

Washington lacks consistent statewide goals and objectives for our higher education system. Over the past three years I’ve worked with a variety of people to improve the system. Those discussions culminated into a comprehensive bill which would set the course of our state’s higher education system in a more strategic direction.

House Bill 1434, which will be re-introduced this session, has four guiding principles. Base reforms on a long-term strategic plan for higher education; address both the changing needs of today’s students and our economy; make higher education more affordable and accessible for all Washingtonians; and most importantly establish a system of accountability for taxpayers so we can be confident the first three principles will be met.

The measure takes into account that the key to success is having a solid, comprehensive strategy in place. A piecemeal approach to higher education policies and funding will not work. Unfortunately the bill failed to receive a hearing in the House Higher Education Committee last year. I will continue to work with my colleagues from both sides of the aisle to move this legislation forward.

2006 Election-year Mailing Restrictions

come before the 2006 Legislature. Unfortunately, due to election year mailing restrictions, my ability to communicate with the people I represent is severely limited.

I am, however, allowed to respond to **ALL** specific, written requests from the citizens of the 41st District. If you would like to be updated on the happenings in the Legislature, please send a letter or an E-mail to my office regarding your interest and I’ll be happy to provide you with the information you need.



I’ll make every attempt to keep you informed on the issues mentioned in this newsletter and others that

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2006 Session Report

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Fred Jarrett
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January 2006

Dear Neighbors:

The Legislature began its work January 9, and as always the scheduled 60-day session will be fast-paced. The Legislature's main priority will be to make minor corrections to the biennial budget to account for any unanticipated spending changes that reflect increases in school enrollment, increased transportation costs for school districts due to higher gas prices or the cost of responding to natural disasters like forest fires, floods and earthquakes.

I will be working to ensure the Legislature continues to handle the taxpayers' dollars sensibly and with accountability for results as our guidepost.

This newsletter will provide you with information on the issues I'll be working on this session. It also includes important contact information so that you may reach me in Olympia. Remember, I am here to represent your views.

If you have questions or concerns about these or others issues, please give me a call, or write to me. An email is always an effective and efficient way to reach me. I'm always happy to hear from you, and welcome your thoughts and ideas.

Thank you for the honor and privilege of serving as your state Representative.

Sincerely,



Fred Jarrett



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2006 Session Report



Budgeting for results

The Legislature must follow sound fiscal principles when deliberating the 2006 supplemental budget. I continue to believe that the Legislature must make budget decisions by focusing on what it should **buy** for taxpayer dollars, not what it should **spend**. The state's goals and priorities should be used as the Legislature's guiding principles in its purchasing decisions. State spending needs to be fiscally responsible and we must be prepared for any economic downturn.

While I'm pleased with the management reforms the governor made through her 'GMAP' process, and her increased emphasis on the Priorities of Government I'd like to see the Legislature use true "Priority of Government" principles like Sen. Rossi and Gov. Locke used when they created a bipartisan budget during difficult economic times.

Although the state's economy has made strong improvements, we can't sit back and take these improvements for granted. Instead, the governor and Legislature must be committed to handling the taxpayers' money sensibly and then be prepared to be held accountable for how they spend those dollars.

Providing consumers choice in health care

More lower-and middle-class working Washingtonians find themselves without medical insurance every year. Businesses large and small struggle to provide health coverage for their employees because there are too many government rules telling health insurers what they must include in their health plans. The Legislature needs to support a multi-faceted approach to health care that will enable consumers to find coverage at costs they can afford, including providing options for employers to find affordable health care coverage by forming small groups. We must give health care decisions back to patients by creating more affordable, flexible choices that will work best for their families and provide access to quality health care.



Educational excellence for Washington students

This year's 10th-graders, the class of 2008, are the first students required to pass the reading, writing and math sections of the WASL as a condition of receiving a certificate of achievement upon graduation. In 2010, the science section will be added to the list of sections which must also be passed. Schools have known this requirement was coming for several years, but now that the WASL is officially tied to a diploma, I'm hearing more concern from parents, students and educators.

The Legislature will be tasked with looking at ways to balance our system to measure if students reach the high standards that have been set for them with providing multiple ways for those students to demonstrate they've mastered the material. It's a widely known fact that children process information differently and we must provide alternative assessments in order to ensure students can demonstrate their success.

Last session the Legislature made great strides by passing legislation to give students up to four opportunities for retakes, as well as alternative means, to meet the WASL state standards. Students who take the WASL in March 2006 will have their first chance to retake all or part of the test in August 2006. This was an excellent first step and this session the Legislature must make sure that those taking advantage of the extra opportunities on the WASL can succeed when they do.

Higher education strategic plan

Our state's outstanding system of higher education is struggling with insufficient resources, increasing demand and rising competition. We need to rethink our goals for Washington's higher education system and translate those goals into a master plan. Ultimately we need to ensure students are completing their education in a timely manner in the most cost-effective manner possible.



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